Legislation for prevention of fake seeds

302. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are coming with a legislation against the sale of fake seeds to farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the other plans of Government to stop the sale of fake seeds; and

(d) the time by which it will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Seeds Bill, 2004 was introduced in Rajya Sabha in December, 2004. The Bill subsumes the provisions of the Seeds Act, 1966, Seeds Rule, 1968 and Seeds (Control) Order, 1983 in addition to making special provisions for compulsory registration of varieties, regulation of Genetically Modified Crops, compensation to the farmers, enhancement of penalty provisions, enforcement of seed law by the Seeds Inspectors etc. The Seeds Bill, 2004 is intended to strengthen quality control of seeds. Enforcement of the existing legal instruments on quality control of seeds vests with the State Governments/Union Territories. Inspectors notified under the existing legal instruments are empowered to draw the samples, seize the stock, issue stop sale order in case of sale of fake seeds. The offences under the existing legal provisions are punishable.

(d) The Seeds Bill, 2004 has been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture for deliberation and consideration.

Checking supply of spurious cotton seeds

303. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that cotton cultivators have suffered a lot as spurious seeds are flooding the market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken by Government or proposed to be taken to check the supply of spurious seeds which causes heavy loss of crops to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the information provided by the Government of Karnataka, Chamatkar Cotton seeds sold by the Mahyco Seed Company at Ranebennur in Haveri District did not perform at the expected level: It was further informed that the failure has been investigated by a Committee headed by Dy. Commissioner of Haveri District. The findings of the Committee are as follows:

(i) This variety has not been officially notified and it is an Arborium variety which has not been officially recommended for the area in which it was sold.

(ii) Adequate field trails were not conducted by Mahyco Company to verify its suitability for different climatic and seasonal conditions.

(iii) The Mahyco Company has not shown in its literature details of the yield in different seasons and under rainfall and irrigated conditions.

(iv) The Company has misguided the farmers by not disclosing the appropriate time and season for sowing.

Government took necessary initiative to compensate the farmers.

(c) The Seeds Act, 1966 Seeds Rule, 1968 and Seeds (Control) Order, 1983 provide a legislative framework for regulation of quality of seeds sold in the country. Enforcement of the existing legal instruments on quality control of seeds vests with the State Governments/Union Territories. Inspectors notified under the existing legal instruments are empowered to draw the samples, seize the stock, issue stop sale order in case of sale of spurious seeds. The offences under the existing legal provisions are punishable.

Further, the Seeds Bill, 2004 which is now under the consideration of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, apart from subsuming the provisions of the Seeds Act, 1966, Seeds Rule, 1968 and Seeds (Control) Order, 1983 has special provisions for compulsory registration of varieties, regulation of Genetically Modified Crops, compensation to the farmers, checking the supply of spurious seeds, enhancement of penalty provisions, enforcement of seed law by the Seed Inspectors etc. The Seeds Bill, 2004 is intended to strengthen quality control of seeds.